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Ministry of Forests

PERRY RIDGE RECOMMENDATIONS ACCEPTED

NELSON – Most of the recommendations made by the local resource use plan table for Perry Ridge have been approved in a rationale for strategic direction released today by Brian Simpson, Arrow forest district manager.

The plan directs forest development planning to manage water, terrain stability, biodiversity, old growth and mature forest, species at risk, ungulate winter range, timber and visual quality.

The local resource use plan table was established in 1997 as a result of concerns over the building of a forest service road at Perry Ridge. Since then, members of the table have worked to reach consensus on land-use issues at Perry Ridge. In August 2000, the table submitted its recommendations to the Arrow forest district.

In his rationale, Simpson clarified a few unresolved issues, including the appropriate level of public involvement in operational planning, additional risk assessment requirements, and management of mature forests. Highlights of the rationale include:

1. Risk Assessment

Assessing risk of forest development to terrain stability, water values, property and human safety will be a priority. When forest development plans are prepared, licensees will hire a qualified registered professional to conduct a geotechnical review in all moderate- to high-risk areas and in all high-hazard areas. This geotechnical review will:

- Identify geotechnical and hydrologic hazards in the forest development plan.
- Ensure recommendations in all previous studies and risk assessments are properly considered by the forest development plan.
- Specify where detailed assessments are required, and ensure professional expertise is used to do these assessments.
- Include a risk assessment summary specific to the forest development plan outlining geotechnical and hydrologic risks.

2. Public Involvement

Until new proposals are brought forward, Simpson has approved the following opportunities for public involvement in operational planning at Perry Ridge:

- When forest development plans are being proposed, all licensed water users who could be affected will be notified by letter.

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- Meetings and field reviews of proposed operations will be provided as requested. Field reviews can be carried out at any stage of the operation.
- Forest development plan open houses will be held as required under the Forest Practices Code.

The table's recommendations, which have now been endorsed by the district manager for implementation, include:
- No harvesting and roadbuilding in some areas.
- Limited harvesting in many watersheds.
- Extra protection for streamside habitats.
- Preference for partial harvesting instead of clearcutting.
- Detailed mapping and hydrologic studies.
- Prohibiting pesticide use and cattle grazing.
- Restricted motorized vehicle access to licensed vehicles only.
- Contingency measures to ensure prompt action in the event of any water disruption.
- Preservation of legacy trees and other heritage elements.
- Old growth forest protection.
- Assessments for species at risk.
- Mature forest management areas.

Approval of the plan also signals the beginning of operational planning at a more detailed level, over smaller areas within Perry Ridge, to identify opportunities for forest development consistent with the local resource use plan.

The local resource use plan now becomes district policy and will be monitored over the next three years. After 2004, parts of the local resource use plan may be established as a higher level plan under the Forest Practices Code of B.C. Act.

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